

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 0361

DEPT PASS TO ALL NON-ALIGNED CAPITALS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, CE

SUBJ: SOME DYNAMICS OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)

1. SUMMARY: IN WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION WITH EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER JANUARY 18, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE DIVISION TOUCHED ON SOME OF THE DYNAMICS OF THE NAM AND SRI LANKA'S ROLE IN IT. END SUMMARY.

2. NAM DECISION MAKING
ACCORDING TO MFA OFFICIAL, FOREIGN MINISTER HAMEED IS KEENLY INTERESTED IN NON-ALIGNED AFFAIRS AND HAS A FREE HAND IN DECISION MAKING. DECISIONS ON NAM ISSUES ARE MADE IN MFA AND ARE CLEARED BY HAMEED. HE NEED NOT GO TO THE PRIME MINISTER FOR FINAL APPROVAL.

3. THE LOCUS FOR SRI LANKA'S ACTIVITY IN THE NAM IS THE NON-ALIGNED COORDINATING BUREAU IN NEW YORK. HAVING RELATIVELY FEW MISSIONS ABROAD, MFA HAS BEST ACCESS TO ALL THE NAM COUNTRIES THROUGH ITS MISSION IN NEW YORK. MFA PROVIDES
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POLICY DIRECTION ON NAM ISSUES TO THE MISSION, WHICH CARRIES THE BRUNT OF NEGOTIATING FINAL NAM POSITIONS. LITTLE NAM ACTIVITY IS CARRIED ON IN COLOMBO. OCCASIONALLY IF THE NEW YORK MISSION REPORTS ON A YUGOSLAV OR INDIAN POSITION, MFA WILL INSTRUCT ITS MISSIONS IN BELGRADE OR NEW DELHI TO DISCUSS MATTERS WITH THE GOVERNMENTS THERE.

4. SOME DIRECTIONS IN NAM

MFA OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT BEING CHAIRMAN OF THE NAM HAS BEEN A CONSTRAINT ON SRI LANKA'S FREEDOM OF ACTION WITHIN THE NAM. HE BELIEVES SRI LANKA WILL HAVE GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION AFTER HAVANA IN TAKING POSITIONS AT VARIENCE WITH THE NAM CONSENSUS, ALTHOUGH IT MAY HAVE REDUCED INFLUENCE AS WELL. WITHIN THE NAM, MFA OFFICIAL SEES AN INCREASED TENDENCY TOWARD MODERATION, E.G., ZAMBIA AND GUYANA HAVE JOINED THE MODERATES. CUBA HAS BEEN LESS RADICAL OF LATE, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE US AND BECAUSE OF THE APPROACHING HAVANA SUMMIT MEETING. MFA IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER CUBA'S RECENT LOW-KEYED APPROACH TO NON-ALIGNED MATTERS WILL CONTINUE ONCE IT ASSUMES THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE NAM IN 1979.

5. MEETINGS

THE AGENDA FOR THE KABUL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR LATE MAY IS BEING WORKED OUT IN THE NAM COORDINATING BUREAU IN NEW YORK. SRI LANKA'S MISSION HAS NOT REPORTED ON THE PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS, BUT MFA'S EXPECTATION IS THAT THE AGENDA WILL BE SIMILAR TO THAT OF LAST YEAR'S MEETING IN NEW DELHI. MFA HAS NO INFORMATION ON WHAT PAPERS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE MEETING. MFA OFFICIAL WAS UNAWARE OF ANY ACTIVITY YET ON THE NAM FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING IN BELGRADE LATER THIS YEAR.
WRIGGINS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED NON-ALIGNED CAPITALS.
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